

Message Text

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ACTION SS-30

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FM AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6811

C O N F I D E N T I A L SANTIAGO 6031

EXDIS/SPECAT EXCLUSIVE

FOR AMBASSADOR CORRIGAN, DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF
DEFENSE, INTERNATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS, FROM CHARGE

REQUEST DEPARTMENT PASS TO OSD/ISA

REF: OASD(ISA) 9849, DTG 042026ZDEC73

1. IT IS MY ASSESSMENT THAT CAPTAIN DAVIS' USEFULNESS AS
COMUSMILGP CHILE HAS NOT REPEAT NOT BEEN IMPAIRED AS A RESULT
OF THE GAFFORD MATTER AND THE ATTENDENT PUBLICITY.

2. IN REACHING THIS ASSESSMENT, I HAVE CONSIDERED WHAT I REGARD
AS THE THREE BASIC AREAS IN WHICH HE MUST BE EFFECTIVE AS
COMUSMILGP: (A) EFFECTIVENESS WITH THE CHIEF OF MISSION, AS
A SENIOR MEMBER OF THE COUNTRY TEAM; (B) EFFECTIVENESS IN EXERCISING
LEADERSHIP WITHIN THE MILGRP; AND (C) EFFECTIVENESS WITH CHILEAN
OFFICIALS.

3. EFFECTIVENESS WITH CHIEF OF MISSION: CAPTAIN DAVIS'
EFFECTIVENESS IN THIS AREA HAS NOT BEEN REDUCED. I CONTINUE TO REGARD
HIM AS A THOROUGHLY CAPABLE PROFESSIONAL, AND TO VALUE AND RELY UPON
HIS JUDGMENT. I RESPECT HIM AS AN OFFICER AND AS A MAN. I CON-
TINUE TO HAVE FULL CONFIDENCE IN HIS UNDERSTANDING AND PERFORMANCE
OF HIS ROLE AS A MEMBER OF THE STAFF OF THE CHIEF OF MISSION, AS
SPELLED OUT IN PRESIDENTIAL DIRECTIVES, WHICH HE HAS CONSISTENTLY
DEMONSTRATED IN THE PAST. CAPTAIN DAVIS HAS BEEN SCRUPULOUS IN
CONSULTING THE CHIEF OF MISSION. HE HAS SHOWN COMPLETE ACCEPTANCE OF
DIRECTIVES FROM THE CHIEF OF MISSION AND EFFECTIVENESS IN IMPLE-
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MENTING THEM. I CONSIDER HIS PERFORMANCE AS COMUSMILGRP TO
HAVE BEEN OUTSTANDING.

4. EFFECTIVENESS WITH MILGRP: THERE IS NO QUESTION IN MY

MIND ABOUT CAPTAIN DAVIS' ABILITY TO CONTINUE TO EXERCISE HIGHLY EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP OF HIS MILGRP. TO VERIFY MY JUDGMENT, I HAVE TAKEN TO MY MIND THE EXTRAORDINARY STEP OF CONSULTING WITH THE CHIEFS OF THE SERVICE SECTIONS OF THE MILGRP OTHER THAN THE NAVY SECTION WHICH CAPTAIN DAVIS HIMSELF HEADS. I FIND THAT THEY CONTINUE TO BE ENTIRELY LOYAL TO HIM AND TO HOLD HIM IN HIGH REGARD.

5. EFFECTIVENESS WITH CHILEAN COUNTERPARTS: IT IS, OF COURSE, A MATTER OF RECORD THAT CAPTAIN DAVIS HAS ESTABLISHED AND MAINTAINED HIGHLY EFFECTIVE RELATIONSHIPS AND EXCELLENT RAPPORT WITH HIGH LEVELS OF THE LOCAL MILITARY COMMAND STRUCTURE. I BELIEVE THAT THE EFFECT OF THIS INCIDENT ON HIS EFFECTIVENESS WITH CHILEAN COUNTERPARTS IS ALTOGETHER NEGLIGIBLE WHEN COMPARED WITH THE IMPACT OF CONTINUING AND ANTICIPATED PROBLEMS IN OUR RELATIONSHIP, DERIVING FROM OUR INABILITY TO BE FULLY RESPONSIVE TO CHILEAN MILITARY NEEDS AND REQUESTS AND FROM INEVITABLE MAP DECISIONS WHICH DRAW US INTO THE AREA OF CHILEAN INTER-SERVICE RIVALRIES. IT IS MY JUDGMENT THAT THIS INCIDENT HAS NOT REPEAT NOT IMPAIRED CAPTAIN DAVIS' EFFECTIVENESS WITH THE CHILEAN OFFICIALS WITH WHOM HE MUST WORK. TO VERIFY MY JUDGMENT IN THIS RESPECT, I CONSULTED WITH THE MINISTER OF DEFENSE ON DECEMBER 6. I REVIEWED THIS ENTIRE MATTER IN DETAIL WITH HIM AND MADE IT CLEAR TO HIM THAT I CONSIDERED IT OF THE UTMOST IMPORTANCE TO BOTH OF US THAT COMUSMILGRP BE AN OFFICER WHO ENJOYS THE FULL RESPECT AND CONFIDENCE OF HIS CHILEAN COUNTERPARTS. I INVITED THE MINISTER TO COMMENT FRANKLY ON ANY MISGIVINGS HE MIGHT HAVE ON THIS SCORE. MINISTER CARVAJAL RESPONDED THAT HE HAD NONE. INDEED, HE SAID, IF ANYTHING HIS ALREADY HIGH RESPECT FOR CAPTAIN DAVIS HAD ONLY BEEN INCREASED BY THE VALOR AND INTEGRITY HE HAD SHOWN, FROM THE MOMENT THIS PROBLEM AROSE, IN ACCEPTING FULL AND SOLE RESPONSIBILITY FOR ACTIONS TAKEN ON THIS MATTER IN CHILE.

I ALSO REQUESTED AN APPOINTMENT WITH THE FOREIGN MINISTER. HE COULD NOT SEE ME UNTIL LATE TODAY, DECEMBER 7. I HAVE JUST RETURNED (1945 HOURS LOCAL) FROM THAT MEETING IN WHICH I PRESENTED THIS MATTER IN THE SAME TERMS USED WITH THE MINISTER OF DEFENSE. FOREIGN MINISTER HUERTA, NOTING THAT HE WAS SPEAKING FOR THE GOC, TOLD ME THAT THE DOD RELEASE ON THIS MATTER HAD ENTIRELY SATISFIED CONFIDENTIAL

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THE GOC, WHICH CONSIDERED THE MATTER CLOSED. HE SAID THE GOC HAS ABSOLUTELY NO MISGIVINGS ABOUT CAPTAIN DAVIS, CONTINUES TO REPOSE FULL FAITH AND CONFIDENCE IN HIM, AND HOLDS HIM IN THE HIGHEST REGARD. ADMIRAL HUERTA ADDED THAT HE WISHED ME TO KNOW THAT, AS A NAVAL OFFICER, THAT WAS HIS PERSONAL POSITION, AS WELL AS THAT OF HIS GOVERNMENT.

6. ON THE BASIS OF THIS ASSESSMENT, IT IS CERTAINLY MY DESIRE THAT CAPTAIN DAVIS BE RETAINED IN HIS PRESENT ASSIGNMENT, WHERE HIS PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE, EXPERIENCE, SOUND JUDGMENT, UNDERSTANDING OF THE LOCAL SETTING AND RAPPORT WITH CHILEAN OFFICIALS MAY CONTINUE TO CONTRIBUTE IMPORTANTLY TO THE WORK OF THIS MISSION.

7. I BELIEVE THE FOREGOING IS ALL THAT I NEED SAY IN RESPONSE TO YOUR REQUEST. HOWEVER, I AM CONSTRAINED TO ADD AN ADDITIONAL COMMENT: AS ONE WHO SUPPORTED OUR RACE RELATIONS AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITY OBJECTIVES LONG BEFORE THEY BECAME PUBLIC POLICY, I DEEPLY REGRET ANY INJUSTICE WHICH MAY HAVE BEEN DONE TO COLONEL GAFFORD. HOWEVER, THAT INJUSTICE CANNOT BE RECTIFIED BY WORKING AN INJUSTICE ON CAPTAIN DAVIS. IT IS MY UNDERSTANDING THAT CAPTAIN DAVIS WAS CONSULTED INFORMALLY WITH REGARD TO POSSIBLE ASSIGNMENT OF AN UNIDENTIFIED BLACK OFFICER TO THE POST OF CHIEF, ARMY SECTION, MILGRP, CHILE. FURTHER, THAT THIS WAS A REQUEST FOR THE REACTION OF COMUSMILGRP WITHOUT ANY SUGGESTION THAT THIS PRELIMINARY SOUNDING SHOULD BE COORDINATED WITH EMBASSY OR CHILEAN OFFICIALS. WHILE ONE MIGHT WELL ASK WHY THIS QUESTION WAS PUT TO CAPTAIN DAVIS, I SUBMIT THAT ONCE IT WAS PUT TO HIM IT WAS HIS DUTY TO PROVIDE HIS ENTIRELY CANDID BEST JUDGMENT AS HE DID. IF HIS JUDGMENT WAS IN ERROR, THERE WERE COUNTLESS OTHERS IN THE PERSONNEL CHAIN WHO HAD AMPLE OPPORTUNITY TO CORRECT IT. IN MY VIEW, CAPTAIN DAVIS SHOULD NOT AND MUST BE BE HELD RESPONSIBLE FOR CONTINUING IMPERFECTIONS IN OUR PERSONNEL SELECTION SYSTEM AND PROCEDURES. THANK YOU FOR CONSULTING ME. BEST REGARDS. GDS79
THOMPSON

NOTE BY OCT: NOT PASSED TO OSD/ISA.

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